

# Family's Role and their Challenging Commitment to English Language Learning - A systematic Review

Andrew Philominraj<sup>ORCID</sup>, Ranjeeva Ranjan<sup>ORCID</sup>, Rodrigo Arellano Saavedra<sup>ORCID</sup>, Claudio Andrés Cerón Urzúa<sup>ORCID</sup>

Universidad Católica del Maule, Chile

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Ranjeeva Ranjan, Universidad Católica del Maule, Avenida San Miguel, 3605, Talca, Chile. E-mail: ranjan@ucm.cl

**Background:** The English language occupies a prominent role in today's globalized world. The importance of this language is on the increase to the extent that this has become a major concern for governments, curriculum designers, educators, and parents. There are several factors, which contribute to achieving the successful learning of the English language. One of these factors is the role of the family and their involvement in the language development of their children.

**Purpose and Method:** The present systematic review is framed in a descriptive qualitative approach since its main objective is to analyze articles that contain information regarding family's role and their challenging pedagogical commitment with their children to the learning of the English language. For this purpose, 16 empirical studies retrieved from SCOPUS and the Web of Science database published between 2016 and 2021 in different EFL contexts were analyzed. The present work followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-analyses (PRISMA) guidelines and was analyzed thematically. Four themes were identified from the empirical studies and were discussed further.

**Results:** The results clearly suggest that the higher commitment of parents is directly proportional to the success rate in the learning of the English language. It also revealed the need for integrating the Family in the English language learning process and be considered while formulating any language/educational policy as well as curriculum development involving English as a foreign language (EFL) learning context in the future. Finally, the study provides information on limitations and implications followed by a conclusion.

**Keywords:** Family, English language, pedagogy, learning, parental styles, engagement

## Introduction

Family engagement in their children's learning processes has a strong influence on their knowledge development (Hartas, 2013). In addition, it adds to their early linguistic and cognitive development through exposition to guided conversations at an early age (Vygostsky, 1978; Dickinson & Tabors, 2001). Family can influence their children's attitudes and motivation towards education by creating a positive and learning environment. Education, without doubt, is a key to the success of any nation and if such is the case, the learning of a foreign language becomes even more important (Philominraj et al., 2020) as it opens door to the future success of children. The growing expansion of English as a global and local communication tool (Gimenez, 2009; Enever & Moon, 2009) has led to formally introduce the English language in the EFL curriculum in several countries. Numerous studies have demonstrated the benefits of learning a foreign language at an early age

(Johnstone, 2002; Bialystok, 2017). These benefits include linguistic (phonological awareness), cognitive (greater creativity and divergent thinking), affective (lowering levels of anxiety in oral production), and socio-cultural development (openness to other cultures) among others. The prospect of introducing foreign language education at an early age influences children's language and cognitive development, a topic of interest and concern for parents and educators (Bialystok, 2017). However, one important stakeholder, parents/family, has not yet been considered in this challenging task towards the English language learning process. The progress in English language learning requires the mediation and stimulation of parents and/or caregivers, who are the ones involved from an early age in establishing routines and supporting children with behavior that promotes self-regulation. In this sense, the emotional, physical, and intellectual needs of infants that are met by the parents contributing to an integral formation with healthy self-esteem (Fujimoto, 2002) allowing them

to grow with a positive attitude towards knowledge. The proactive involvement of the family (Weinstien et al., 2000) in their role as shadow teachers constitutes a key element of success for their childrens' learning English. This involvement at the same time helps parents to envision childrens' future without losing the grips of the actuality instead of fantasy (Hajar, 2019).

The present study aims to fill this gap by carrying out a review of the existing literature on the topic of family/parents to their role in English language learning. Parental involvement leads to great academic achievement in English language learners' (Shin & Seger, 2016) and language and literacy development (Percy et al., 2013) at the same time a clear comprehension of school curricula, which allows them to build a meaningful rapport with teachers (Kwan & Wong, 2016). This systematic review under the framework of qualitative descriptive study addresses the extent to which the role of the family contributes to the educational processes of children, especially in the learning of a foreign language. Additionally, parents' involvement and their positive attitude in the lives of the children favor integral development. For this reason, this article has been developed not only considering concepts such as Family and parental style but also using it interchangeably and later connecting them to their challenging commitment to language learning.

## Literature review

### Family

Families consist of a complex group of relationships, where the actions of any of its members have a positive or negative effect on others. This unit is influenced by a greater social and cultural context, where each one interacts (children, youth, adults, and elderly people). According to the ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner (cited in García, 2002), the family nucleus would be a component of the ecological environment, which consists of a set of serial and well-regulated structures at different levels, each of them containing the other. These levels have been called: microsystem, mesosystem, exo-system, and macro-system. The microsystem is the most immediate level in which the individual develops (usually the family); the mesosystem includes the interrelations of two or more environments wherein the developing person participates enthusiastically (school, work). The exo-system is made up of larger contexts that do not include the person as an active subject; finally, the macro-system is shaped by the culture and subculture in which the person and all

individuals in society develop. All levels of the ecological model depend on each other and, therefore, the joint participation of different contexts and communication among them is required. Besides, the model presented is dynamic, so its influence can produce new conditions that affect the development of its components (Berk, 1999).

Thus, the family is in constant communication with the other systems, and therefore, these configure or establish somehow the way of acting of its components. In this way, each family nucleus is differentiated both in its interaction and in its composition.

### Parenting Style

Each family is different because it is exposed to different social, cultural, economic factors, and consequently to different types of interactions. In this sense, how a family raises their children plays a fundamental role in their subsequent development. Parenting styles account for the way families interact and teach their children. Among the styles defined by Baumrind (Vielma, 2002; Comellas, 2003; Vallejo & López, 2004) are the disciplinarian, permissive, authoritative, and uninvolved. In the first parenting style, families value obedience and control over their children, they are highly demanding, leaving aside the receptivity. These types of families tend to be indifferent and less affectionate, so their children tend to be withdrawn and more dissatisfied. In the second parenting style, the family value self-regulation and self-expression, so they make little demands on their children, leaving it to the children themselves to control their activities. Family care and accept, they are receptive, but not demanding. Children raised under this style tend to be more immature, with less capacity for self-control and less interest in exploring (pre-school age). In the authoritative style, families are demanding, respectful of the individuality of the child, and they emphasize social values. These families respect their children's interests, opinions, and personalities, are affectionate, and at the same time firm to impose norms and punishments, favoring the exchange of opinions. The relationship is a rational and democratic approach in which the rights of both family and children are respected. Boys and girls raised under this style feel safe because they know that their family loves them and also know what they expect from them (Torío López et al., 2008). In pre-school age, these children tend to trust themselves, control themselves, show interest in exploring, and be satisfied (Arranz et al., 2004). Finally, in the uninvolved parenting style, families do not demand nor are they receptive,

showing a minimum commitment to early childhood education. This type of family faces the demands of their children, preferably when they are easily accessible, but when they involve greater effort or dedication their performance is deficient (Valdivia, 2010; López-Soler et al., 2009; Montero & Jiménez, 2009; Gervilla, 2008; Oliva et al., 2007; Ato et al., 2007; Arranz et al., 2004).

In this sense, the most beneficial parenting style for children and young people would be the democratic one. The support of this type of family would mean the key to expanding the children's competences, enhancing their appreciation for the acquisition of new knowledge, among others. Among the necessary characteristics in a family to provide effective support to their children, aspects such as a warm family atmosphere, absence of conflicts so that positive development of the children is reinforced, and at the same time, channeling conflicts into activities that allow them to expand their potentialities are foundational. In this way, the family would provide a solid base for the child to form a positive self-concept, which will be reflected in their behaviors and attitudes in social contexts (Alonso & Román, 2005; Lila & Gracia, 2005).

Parental involvement in school appears to be another aspect of their contribution to children's educational activity. These activities are traditionally limited to school-related activities. These are further divided according to their location as school and home based activities. The former includes communication and participation at school and the latter helping children with homework, conversing about their experiences at school (Avvisati et al., 2010).

Family support can also be evidenced in the degree of involvement of the family or family in the academic work of their children, mediating their learning in conjunction with their cognitive development (Cooper & Valentine, 2001; Cooper et al., 2006; Rosario et al., 2009). Vygotsky (cited in Lefrançois, 2001) developed several investigations related to this topic; among them are the functions of language, which are bounded according to the age of the children. At 3 years of age, the pre-school is in the social stage; the egocentric stage is showed from 3 to 7 years: in this phase, the language controls the child's own behavior. Finally, the internal stage, which takes place from the age of 7, and guides the direction of a child's thinking and behavior. Following Vygotsky, it can be stated that the relationship between development and learning in children can be reduced essentially to three important theoretical positions. The first mentions that the child's development processes are independent of learning, which is considered as an external process not so involved in development. The second proposes that

learning is development, considering the latter as the domain of conditioned reflexes implying that the learning process is related to the development process. Regarding the third, the development is based on two related processes, maturation and learning (the latter would stimulate the maturation process).

The above mentioned positions have a direct correlation to what Vygotsky could call "Zone of proximal development". This refers to the capacity in solving a problem with help of an adult or a skilled partner (Vygotsky, 1988). According to the actual level of development, Vygotsky (1988) considers that some functions have already matured. Therefore, the zone of proximal development defines those functions in process of maturation, where the child can interact with people in their environment, in cooperation with someone similar.

To sum up, be it a family or parental style several studies on language learning highlight (Weinstein et al., 2000) how influential the family and educational context in which the foreign language learner is situated, the frequency with which he/she approaches the language and the constant usefulness he/she can give to it can be on learning. Broadfoot et al. (2008) point out that if both the family and the school are contexts for language learning, they become a stimulus for the student to be active, constructive, and collaborative, to develop a spirit of overcoming mistakes, and to maintain a constant motivation for learning. The above is visualized regarding the environment represented by family as relevant for the stimulation of learning a foreign language.

### **Family's Influence on Language Learning**

In relation to family support, several types of research show that children who have a good relationship with their family tend to perform better in school (González-Pienda et al., 2002; Stevenson & Baker, 1987; Dornbusch et al., 1987). Children exposed to the English language at an early age by their family have led them not only to familiarize themselves with the language but also were encouraged to learn the language (Md Yunus et al., 2020). This suggests the experiences that families face could be associated with that of what happens at school (Lau & Leung, in Jadue, 2003). Research establishes that there are three factors linked to learning that are related to the development of language, reading, and writing in years before school. The first one is related to the expanded speech referring to language exposure in a context familiar to the child. The second refers to the introduction of new words, the product of active listening in conversations with adults. The third one accounts for the support to the reading writing at home (Tamis-LeMonda & Rodriguez, 2009).

For communication to be effective, linguists describe four basic components of language: phonology, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics. The first refers to the auditory interpretation of language, so all exterior sounds are imitated, which provides a structure to these sounds. The second refers to the meaning and structure of language. The third one alludes to the phenomenon in which the words unite with each other and sentences are formed. Finally, pragmatic is the ability that children have to properly use the language they have been learning (Berk 1999).

Young children are in a process of constant learning, acquiring all kinds of tools through their external environment (close relatives, friends, and classmates). This does not limit to the mother tongue but equally applicable to second or foreign language learning. During the first 5 years of age, the vocabulary acquisition process is very intense, reaching about 8,000 words (Pellicer-Sánchez & Schmitt, 2010). Therefore, at the time of reading to children, what is intended is to promote awareness in them about the language system and its structure. Children, who are exposed to listening to a wide range of books in the English language, read by their parents repeatedly become familiar with the language.

The learning pace at an early age is extremely fast and flexible, allowing children to acquire a wide range of new knowledge. This is how the teaching of other languages, such as English, becomes important since the acquisition of it at home and in pre-school (Broadfoot et al., 2008) children would be facilitated given their capacities to process and maintain new knowledge. According to Berk (1999), a large body of research shows that children who speak two languages fluently are advanced in a variety of cognitive and metalinguistic skills. This is in line with the theory of constructivism by Vygotsky (Sjøberg, 2010), which considers that learning is an active and constructive process. The theory takes into account personal experiences and environment to the construction of knowledge. Children's exposure to the English language has constituted a vital experience to link and relate "to the new information or learning process throughout their lives" (Md Yunus et al., 2020).

In this way, family plays an important role and has a powerful influence on children's learning when they are young, and still do not attend school. The best way to help children is to fully understand their experiences and discover their skills, which will pave the way to develop the most appropriate strategy to facilitate their learning. Therefore, there is no better mobilizing agent of knowledge than the family, the acquisition of a new language will be influenced mainly by the degree of

involvement of the household and secondly by the teaching given by the educators.

The objective of this current study is to analyze articles that contain information regarding family's role and their challenging pedagogical commitment with their children to English language learning. Hence, the following are the research questions that guided this systematic literature review:

1. What research approaches, contexts, methodologies, and instruments are used in research studies on the role of family/parents to English language learning of their children in various EFL contexts carried out during 2016-2021?
2. What are the major themes identified in the selected research studies carried out during 2016-2021?

## Materials and Methods

### Background

The working method is a comprehensive systematic review of the scientific literature concerning the family's role and commitment to English language learning. For this purpose, 16 empirical studies retrieved from SCOPUS and the Web of Science database published between 2016 and 2021 in different EFL contexts were analyzed. The present work followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-analyses (PRISMA) (Urrútia & Bonfill, 2010) guidelines and was analyzed thematically. This allowed a rational synthesis of relevant research in the area (Beltrán, 2005; Meca, 2010). In addition to the search in the databases, a reference chain or snowball sampling was carried out. This helped in the construction of the theoretical framework considered relevant to the subject in the study (Izquierdo, 2015).

### Search Criteria

The search terms were identified based on the topic of study. The search terms which included the following key terms were employed for both the data bases, Scopus and Web of Science.

- ("Family"AND "English language learning")
- ("Family role"AND "English language learning")
- ("Parents" AND "English language learning")
- ("Parental engagement"AND "English language learning")
- ("Father"AND "English language learning")
- ("Mother"AND "English language learning")

### Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

A PRISMA flow diagram for the search and inclusion/exclusion process is presented in Figure 1. A total of 114 titles (SCOPUS= 84, Web of Science=30) and/or abstracts assembled from the databases were reviewed by the researchers and 49 articles were excluded due to time frame, as they belonged to research carried out before 2016. The remaining 65 were checked for duplicity resulting in 41 useable articles. Applying the different Inclusion Criteria (IC) such as English language learning, Family, Parents, and articles written in the English language, and Exclusion criteria (EC) such as students' perspective, teacher centered, other subjects, and other languages, finally 16 articles met the criteria for this systematic review.

### Analysis Phase

The analysis phase considered the research questions proposed in this study. All the selected articles conducted in various EFL contexts with the details of research approaches, country of research (contexts), methodologies, and instruments are presented in Table 1. In this study, selected articles were examined for identifying themes on family's role and their

commitment towards their children's English language learning. Thematic analysis was used to categorize facts for uncovering meaning (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006), which would offer relevant information to parents/ family role to their children language educational process in an EFL context.

Parents/family's consciousness of their role paves the way to take up the challenge in promoting and developing English language learning in their children. The systematic revision of the articles led to identifying few major themes, and consequently a few subthemes, which facilitated researchers to reach the objective of this study.

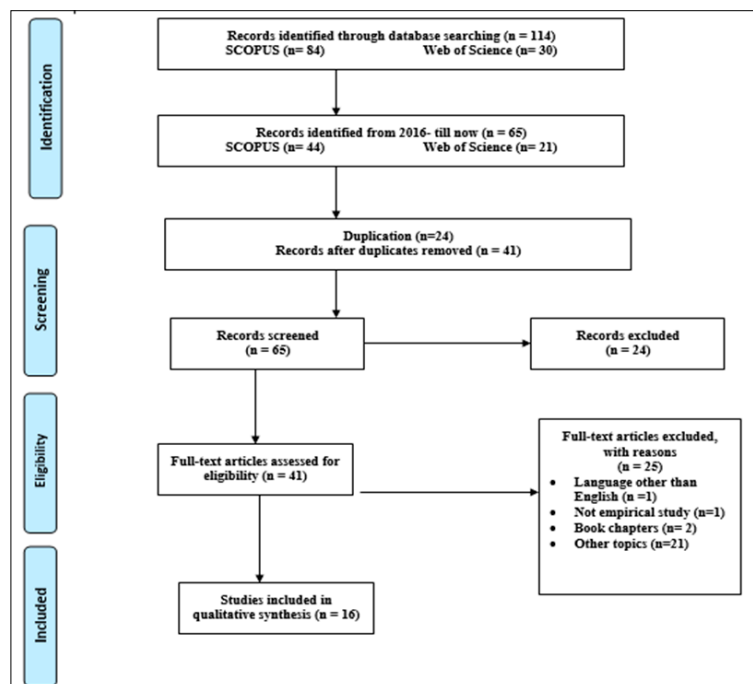
The first main theme found in the systematic review was family/ parental influence, involvement, and engagement. Under this theme, four subthemes were identified which are family influence, parental involvement in the digital era, family/parental engagement, and parental involvement in young learners. The second main theme that emerged from the studies was social and economic support to Children's English language learning. The third main theme was Parents as a social factor & their attitude. The last main theme was the Parenting style.

**Table 1**

*Research studies included in the systematic review*

**Figure 1**

*PRISMA flow diagram*



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Theme	Research study	Title	Context	Methodology	Instruments	Main findings
I. Parental/family influence, engagement and environment	Cameron, D. (2021)	Case studies of Iranian migrants' WTC within an ecosystems framework: The influence of past and present language learning experiences	Iranian migrants in New Zealand	QUAL; longitudinal	Questionnaires; observations; stimulated recall; multiple interviews	family influence as a factor affecting the past English language learning (ELL) experiences apart from the type of school and expertise of teachers
IA. family influence	Sitti Nur Suraya (2020)	Teacher performance, parent's role, and student learning outcomes in muhammadiyah junior high school	Grade 8 students in Indonesia	QUAN; descriptive analysis; Cross-sectional	Likert scale questionnaires (teacher performance questionnaire and role of parents questionnaire).	parents role affecting English Language learning outcome by 0,073 or 7,3% and has a positive correlation
	Md. Yunus et al. (2020)	The voyage of ESL learners' English language learning in the era of post-colonialism: A thematic analysis	postgraduate ESL students in Indonesia	QUAL; thematic analysis	Life history about experiences in acquiring English language	Family in the era of post-colonialism influenced the learners in their English language learning process. Besides the family pressure and their role in motivating the learners were other elements, which were found in the narrative inquiry of the participants
IB. parental involvement in the digital era	Moorhouse & Beaumont (2020)	Involving Parents in Their Children's School-based English Language Writing Using Digital Learning	Grade 3 students in Hong Kong	Action Research	Parental Involvement on Seesaw	research showed the passive role of parental involvement rather than an active one, highlighting the importance of parental involvement in the new era of digital learning platforms
	Bang et al. (2020)	Testing a research-based digital learning tool: Chinese EFL children's linguistic development	5-6 year children in Hangzhou, China	Mixed method	Experimental design to check the effectiveness of digital tools in learning English language in EFL context.	The research sheds light on digital language learning which was found to be effective and supports the idea that the parents should be involved to use digital tools to facilitate their children's develop English language skills.
IC. family/parental engagement	Nomnian & Arphattananon (2018)	School administrators' competencies for effective english language teaching and learning in thai government primary schools	6 school administrators, (4 principals and 2 head teachers of foreign language departments) in Thailand	QUAL; thematic analysis	Semi-structured interview	Although the research is mainly based on the school administration, it referred to the fact that English language proficiency and life-long learning skills can be reinforced and made continuous by a chain of complex factors, family engagement being one of them.
	Alqahrani (2017)	The L2 Motivational Self System and Religious Interest among Saudi Military Cadets: A Structural Equation Modelling Approach	Cadets (19 yrs. Old) from the Saudi King Abdulaziz Military Academy, Saudi Arabia	QUAN; structural equation modelling (SEM)	Likert scale questionnaire	parental involvement helped to their ought-to L2 self-motivation and also to their language learning attitudes The study also showed the contribution of parental encouragement towards language learning attitudes.

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Research study</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Methodology</i>	<i>Instruments</i>	<i>Main findings</i>	
I. parental involvement in young learners	Kalaycı & Ergül (2020)	Teachers' perceptions of the role of parental involvement in teaching English to young learners	English language teachers working at three different private primary schools in Ankara, Turkey	QUAL; thematic inductive analysis;	Open ended questionnaire	This study explored English language teachers' perceptions about parental role and commitment in student's ELL process. The results of the study indicate the importance of parental commitment in teaching English to beginners as recognized by the teachers. However, the study also shows that the teachers in no way take effort to set parent-teacher collaboration.	
	II. Social and economic support to children's ELL	Bae and Park (2019)	Investing in the future: Korean early English education as neoliberal management of youth	12 early study abroad Korean families (mother and the students) in Singapore	QUAL	Ethnographic interviews.	The paper discusses parents' concern for their children's future and their choice of choosing English language learning as an issue of neoliberal anticipation.
		Hajar, Anas (2019)	Examining the Impact of Immediate Family Members on Gulf Arab EFL Students' Strategic Language Learning and Development	Seven Arab participants in United Kingdom	QUAL; thematic analysis	written narrative and subsequent semi-structured interviews	Results revealed that higher educated parent's contribution was higher in making their children confident in speaking English right from the beginning. They also provided opportunities for private education. Better professions and higher income, lead to better opportunities for their children, be it education or learning English.
		Sico and De Vera (2018)	Grammatical competence of Junior High School students	177 Junior High School students in Philippines	QUAN; inferential statistics	Questionnaire; test on subject-verb agreement	the results based on the computed effect size revealed that "monthly family income" has a medium or typical effect. The study concluded that in the context of the students' characteristics, family monthly income significantly relates to student's grammatical competence.
	Bai et al. (2018)	The Relationship between Social Support, Self-Efficacy, and English Language Learning Achievement in Hong Kong	1,092 8th-12th graders in Hong Kong	QUAN; descriptive statistics, CFA	Likert scale Questionnaire;	Parents' optimistic help and effectiveness are interwoven and are found to predict students' English learning achievement. Further, the study highlighted the parents' social contribution may help in developing children's self-efficacy in the Hong Kong context.	

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<i>Theme</i>	<i>Research study</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Methodology</i>	<i>Instruments</i>	<i>Main findings</i>
	Kim and Okazaki (2017)	Short-term 'Intensive Mothering' on a budget: Working mothers of Korean children studying abroad in Southeast Asia	14 mothers, 4 fathers, and their 18 children in Korea	QUAL; constant comparison method to identify the core themes	semi-structured interviews using a set of open-ended questions	mothers in their role as education managers were one of the effective parenting contributions towards their children's learning of the English language
III. Parents as a social factor & their attitude	Getie (2020)	Factors affecting the attitudes of students towards learning English as a foreign language	1030 High School Grade 10 students in Debre Markos, Ethiopia	Mixed method; triangulation of results	Questionnaire as main instrument; semi-structured interview; focus group Discussion	Parents as social factors influence students' attitudes, which favors the learning of English as a foreign language. The study highlights that parents attitude to the target language is mirrored by learners attitudes as well affecting their achievement in learning the language.
	Baharudin et al. (2019)	The relationship between students' attitudes and English language accomplishment: The instance of freshmen in a private learning institution	175 first year students in a private institution in Malaysia	Mixed method; statistical analysis	Questionnaire; semi-structured interview	The article highlights that the parents should leverage their vital role in improving their children's English language learning. Learners' positive attitudes are also influenced by other factors such as their parents. The important role of parents in educating the child is undeniable. Parents hold the responsibility in guiding the child towards positive attitudes to learning which can be achieved by educating them with this mindset from early childhood.
IV. Parenting style	Khodadady & Hadizadeh (2016)	Parenting and English language learning at Iranian grade one senior high schools: A theoretical and empirical approach	319 female grade one senior high schools in Iran	QUAN; statistical analysis	Questionnaire; English language score	The results showed that along with the parenting domain, its authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive genera correlate significantly with English achievement at different degrees and in opposite directions. It further reveals that considering authoritative parenting means paving the way to their childrens' English achievement.



## Results and Discussion

The systematic review based on the 16 articles finally considered are classified under four main themes, which are as follows; Parental/family influence, engagement and environment, Social and economic support to children's ELL, parents as a social factor, and their attitude and finally parenting style.

The research studies included in this review were theoretical and empirical in nature and some were case studies. The methodologies and study designs used in these selected studies were qualitative (44%), quantitative (31%), mixed method (19%) and action research (6%). The participants in these studies were students from both preschool to higher secondary and university. The other participants included actors from the educational setup like principal, teachers and administrators and the parents.

### I. Parental Family Influence, Engagement and Environment

#### a) Family influence

Under this theme, the first subtheme is family influence. Cameron (2021) in her longitudinal qualitative study into the willingness to communicate (WTC) of Iranian migrants found that family influence was one of the factors affecting the previous English language learning (ELL) experiences apart from the type of school and expertise of teachers. Sitti Nur Suraya (2020) in their quantitative study investigated the effect of teacher performance and the parents' role towards the learning outcome of various subjects, English language being one of them. They found that the teacher performance has no effect on English Language learning outcome with a Beta value of -0.005 or 0,5% while the role of parents affects English Language learning outcome by 0,073 or 7,3% and has a positive correlation. Thus proving the hypothesis of their work that there is a significant correlation between the role of parents and English Language learning outcomes. Further, the researcher highlighted how significant is the family's role in the tri center of education that includes school, family, and community. The study also found that students improved their achievement at school due to the family environment. In the last study under this subtheme, Md. Yunus et al. (2020) in their qualitative study with five ESL learners found that family in the era of post-colonialism influenced the learners in their English language learning process. Referring to the theoretical framework of Vygotskian constructivism, they reported that the learners' prior exposure to the English language during their childhood helped them in their learning process by

linking or relating the previous knowledge to the new one. Besides the family pressure and their role in motivating the learners were other elements, which were found in the narrative inquiry of the participants.

#### b) Parental involvement in the digital era

The second subtheme was parental involvement in the digital era. Under this subtheme, there were two research studies, first Moorhouse & Beaumont (2020) and second Bang et al. (2020). This subtheme becomes even more important during this time of pandemic in the online learning context when the role of parents is being seen as a significant element by the educational institutions because of the time spent by the learners at home. Moorhouse & Beaumont (2020) in their action research highlighted the importance of parental involvement in the new era of digital learning platforms wherein the role of parents is not only limited to traditional ways by supervising homework or participating in school but invited to openly involve in digital learning platforms. Their research showed the passive role of parental involvement rather than an active one. Although Bang et al. (2020) in their study did not talk about parental involvement explicitly, their research sheds light on digital language learning which was found to be effective and supports the idea that the parents should be involved to use the digital tools to help beginner students develop English language skills.

#### c) Family/parental engagement

The third subtheme was family/parental engagement. In this category, we found two research studies. The first one was Nomnian & Arphattananon (2018) and the second being Alqahtani (2017). Nomnian & Arphattananon (2018) in their qualitative research with six government primary schools administrators in Thailand found five essential key competencies leading to achieve success in English language teaching and learning. Also, the study underlines the importance of harmonious collaboration among all those involved in education to foster strategic alliance by thus creating synergies towards the same direction. Although the research is mainly based on the school administration, it referred to the fact that English language proficiency and life-long learning skills can be reinforced and made continuous by a chain of complex factors, family engagement being one of them. The research highlighted that these factors are entwined in the educational networks that need permanent and shared contributions from all important stakeholders encouraging learners towards English language learning success. Alqahtani (2017) in his quantitative study underlined that the influence of students' parents was salient as parental encouragement promoted their ought-to L2 self-

motivation in addition to their attitudes about language learning. The research study points out the considerable impact of parents on their children in this research context of Saudi Arabia which, according to the researcher, is a conservative and collective society. The study also showed the contribution of parental encouragement towards language learning attitudes.

#### ***d) Parental involvement in young learners***

The fourth subtheme under this category was parental involvement in young learners. Kalaycı & Ergül (2020) in their research study explored the role of parental involvement in young learners as perceived by the English teachers. In this qualitative study conducted in Turkey with 25 primary school English language teachers, the results showed five emerging themes on the role of parental involvement based on their perception. The researchers concluded that parent's influence on student's language development is a topic that teachers are conscious about. They also highlight the need for reinforcement of students' language development both academically and motivationally. However, the study also showed that there isn't any initiative on the part of the teachers to promote parent-teacher collaboration.

## **II. Social and Economic Support to Childrens' English Language Learning**

The second theme that emerged from the studies was social and economic support to Childrens' English language learning. Under this theme, a subtheme is the concept of Mother as education manager researched by Kim and Okazki (2017). In this study through a qualitative method, 14 Korean mothers were interviewed and the results highlighted that mothers in their role as education managers were one of the effective parenting contributions towards their children's learning of the English language. Most working mothers who accompany their children fostering to learn English view it as their own opportunity to enact the role of dedicated and competent educational-manager mothers. In another study carried out by Bae and Park (2019) in a Korean context examined how commercial visualizations of the future contribute to neoliberalism's seizure of language learning as a strategy for capital accumulation. The paper highlights parent's concern for their children's future and their choice of choosing English language learning as an issue of neoliberal anticipation. Finally, the authors conclude that the affective involvement of parents in the early English education of their children might serve as a platform to fostering human resources.

Hajar (2019) using a qualitative study reveals the influence of Gulf Arab parents and siblings on students' English language learning experiences and strategies used at home. The result indicated that the economic wellbeing of the parents not only favors good living to children but it is so closely knitted to the fact of providing good education and especially English language learning. Educationally qualified parents encouraged their children to project themselves as English speakers right from the start, and this is noticed in their choice of sending children to highly equipped private institutions. In another quantitative study by Sioco and De Vera (2018), 177 Junior High school students participated in research on grammar competence. The results based on the computed effect size revealed that "monthly family income" has a medium or typical effect on learners' level of grammatical competence. The study concluded that in the context of the students' characteristics, family monthly income significantly relates to student's grammatical competence.

Bai et al. (2018), through a quantitative method, applied a survey questionnaire to 1092 secondary school students in Hong Kong and found out that Parents' positive support is positively correlated with self-efficacy and English learning. Parents' positive support and self-efficacy are interwoven and are found to predict students' English learning achievement. Further, social support understood as parent's support is an indirect catalyzer to foster self-efficacy in students by means of which they achieve English learning in Hongkong. In this sense, self-efficacy acts as a mediator between the sociocultural factor and English learning achievement.

## **III. Parents as Social Factor**

The third theme that emerged was Parents as a social factor & their attitude. On a social note, several studies (Getie, 2020; Baharudin et al., 2019) revealed that parent's attitudes to the target language are mirrored by learner's attitudes as well. Learners adopting parent's attitudes is a fact that affects their achievements in learning the language. It is also important to note that even if parents do not have knowledge or fluency in the English language, the very fact of realizing its importance makes them support and guide their children's successful learning of the English language. The important role of parents in educating the child is undeniable. Parents hold the responsibility in guiding the child towards positive attitudes to learning which can be achieved by educating them with this mindset from early childhood.

#### IV. Parenting Style

The last theme that was found is the Parenting style. Another factor related to English language learning has to do with parenting style wherein the “authoritative genus of both parents relates to students English learning achievement” (Khodadady & Hadizadeh, 2016). The results of the study carried out by the above-mentioned authors showed that not only the parenting domain but also its authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive genera correlate significantly with English achievement at different degrees.

#### Conclusion

The present systematic review in line with the first research question raised in this study, as presented in the Table 1, clearly indicates that the methodologies and study designs used in these selected studies were diverse. Methodologies used in these research studies vary from quantitative (31%), qualitative (44%), mixed (19%) and action methods (6%). The participants in these studies were students from both preschool to higher secondary and university. The other participants included actors from the educational setup like principal, teachers and administrators and the parents. This topic has been researched in different parts of the world as highlighted in the context in the Table 1. However, most of the studies have been carried out in the Asian and African context which clearly indicates the significance of the rigourousity on the topic, but at the same time the systematica review revealed the lack of research in this field in European, North and South American context.

The present systematic review, responding to the second research question, established four themes, which are parental/family influence, engagement and environment, social and economic support to children’s ELL, parents as a social factor and their attitude and finally parenting style. In relation to the first three themes, it could be concluded that family influence involvement, and environment positively influences student learning, boosting the skills related to learning and language development. A family who provides stress-free consistent support during the first five years of the infants will generate a positive environment to learn a new language promoting the learning of new vocabulary at a critical period in terms of acquiring the segmental and suprasegmental features of the foreign language such as English. The parental proactivity in promoting children’s autonomy, eliminating distractions in the learning process, meeting their social needs,

supporting children for formal schooling, particularly in their homework, and fostering digital tools has been shown to increase the academic performance and adaptation to formal education, which in turn will definitively help to the learning of English as a foreign language. The review also highlighted that family engagement strengthened life-long learning skills and at the same time, parental encouragement positively contributed to language learning attitudes and motivation.

In relation to the final theme of parenting style, it could be concluded that the authoritative parental style has more possibilities to influence positively in improving the self-perception, the motivation, and the attitude that the child has towards these factors. The above-mentioned elements favor the learning processes and the acquisition of cognitive strategies making the English language learning process easy and enjoyable. The systematic support during the school tasks and the reinforcement of the self-concept positively modifies the perspective of the personal effort and self-regulation of the children so the involved parental behavior stimulates persistence and decreases levels of frustration leading to the learning of English as a foreign language.

The results clearly suggest that the higher commitment of parents is directly proportional to the success rate in the learning of the English language. It also revealed the need for integrating the Family in the English language learning process and be considered while formulating any language/educational policy as well as curriculum development involving English as a foreign language (EFL) learning context in the future. Ultimately, it could be concluded that any parental support paves the way to the increase of linguistic competence and boosts self-confidence in their children, which is a challenging commitment towards learning the English language.

#### Implication and limitation

The implications of the study go in line with adding new dimensions to the ongoing topic of families’ role in their children’s learning of a foreign language. The findings of this analysis provide a critical and current overview for practical implications to all those teachers and researchers involved in this area of family and English language learning. This study by highlighting factors on the topic might help the educational policymakers to promote parents’ involvement in their children’s English language learning trajectory. The researchers anticipate that the identified problems and proposals could provide insights for academics and practitioners for

overcoming the challenges faced by the parents to their commitment. Moreover, the findings suggest that more studies are needed to find ways to deal with the parents challenging commitment to their children learning in EFL contexts.

One of the limitations is that the present study employed articles regarding Family and commitment to their children's English language learning in an interval of five years (2016-2021). If the range time would have been extended, it could have offered a greater possibility to further strengthen this research. Another factor was confining the search only to two databases such as WoS and Scopus.

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### Declaration of Competing Interest

None declared.

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